

## Ex-HMO attorney named head regulator of California health plans

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A former attorney for one of the nation's largest HMOs has been picked to run the California agency that oversees health plans.

Brent Barnhart, 68, was named by Gov. Jerry Brown this week to lead the California Department of Managed Health Care, which regulates HMO health coverage for more than 21 million Californians.

Barnhart spent 13 years as senior counsel for the Oakland-based Kaiser Foundation Health Plan. The nonprofit provides healthcare to more than 8.8 million people in eight states and Washington, D.C.

Barnhart came out of retirement to take the job, becoming just the third director of the managed healthcare department since it was created more than a decade ago.

The Danville resident said he couldn't resist the opportunity to lead a consumer protection agency, particularly with national healthcare reform swiftly changing how health plans and providers deliver healthcare.

"This is a career capper for me," Barnhart said. "This is like being released to do what I want -- to make things work."

Prior to his work at Kaiser, Barnhart spent three years as a policy consultant to the state Assembly and was legislative affairs director for Blue Cross of California in the early 1990s. He also worked at the Association of California Life and Health Insurance Companies, a trade group, and at the American Civil Liberties Union.

Barnhart must still be confirmed by the state Senate. His annual salary will be \$142,965.

Brown made two other healthcare-related appointments this week, neither of which requires Senate confirmation.

The governor named Shelley Rouillard, 55, as chief deputy director of the managed healthcare department. The Sacramento resident came from the state's Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board, where she was deputy director of the benefits and quality monitoring division. She will earn \$125,000.

John Shen, 61, has been appointed chief of the long-term care division at the state Department of Health Care Services. In his last job, Shen was executive director of the Marin Community Clinic. The Berkeley resident will earn \$122,196 a year.

-- Duke Helfand

[http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money\\_co/2011/08/brent-barnhart-california-healthcare-regulator.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money_co/2011/08/brent-barnhart-california-healthcare-regulator.html)